

Before You're Gone by MadcapRainbow

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Summary:

Will is leaving.

And Mike can't let him go without telling him how he feels.

Before You're Gone

Moving away.

Will is moving away.

Mike almost can't believe it's real. Almost refuses to. Like if he just pretends it's not a thing then at some point everyone's going to jump out from hiding places and yell 'surprise bitch!' and it'll all turn out to be a huge prank on him.

But that's not going to happen. It didn't happen when Will first told him, as much as Mike had wished it would. Wished so hard that Will would break into a grin and say it was all a prank to see the look on Mike's face.

Instead he'd just had that look on his face that Mike knows all too well; that look where he's sad but doesn't want people to know so he refuses to show it. Except Mike could tell, because of course he could.

"Where to?" Mike had asked. Needed to anchor something, some point of reference so he'd know at least how far away Will was going to be.

"Mom found a place in California." Will had said, and that had hit Mike like a ton of bricks. California; basically the other side of the whole damn country. So far away.

Looking back on it now, Mike had felt something inside him crumble at hearing it. He'd been hoping, since Will first dropped the bomb on him, that at least it wouldn't be somewhere far away. He knew the Byers weren't rich, so selfishly he'd been hoping they couldn't afford to move far.

But fuck, California was just insanely, impossible far. Will was going to be insanely, impossibly far.

He'd put on a brave face. He knew he couldn't let Will see him fall apart, like he'd wanted to. "That's awesome! California's so cool."

"Yeah?"

"Dude, definitely! Way cooler than Hawkins," he'd said "just think of the beaches, the sun. The hot girls in bikinis."

"Mike..."

"I'm, like, super jealous right now. I wish I could live in California." Mike had left 'with you' unsaid, even though it was screaming at him from inside his head. He'd pushed the thoughts aside; they were fantasies and he couldn't let himself get lost in them.

They'd lapsed into silence, then. Mike had felt he should say something else, but then Will changed the subject. He probably didn't want to talk about moving away any more. Mike knew it must have been eating Will up inside to leave his friends, but there was nothing they could do about it. It was out of their hands.

It is out of their hands.

Will is going to move away. Mike's going to lose him.

And every time he thinks about it, he can't help but think back to that night at the quarry. What had been one of the worst nights of his entire life. Seeing them drag Will's body out of the water.

And obviously it wasn't Will. Because Will is safe, and he's fine. And he's sat across from Mike on the basement sofa, nose buried in an X-Men comic, one leg draped over Mike's because this sofa is not big enough for them both to lounge out like this any more.

But every time Mike thinks about it, the pain was so real. It had felt like someone had dug into his chest and ripped his heart out. Like his world had come tumbling down around him in one single horrifying moment.

He'd tried to tell himself that it would have felt the same if it had been any of his friends. But there had always been something different about his friendship with Will. He'd told Will once that asking him to be his friend was the best thing he'd ever done, and he'd meant every word of it.

He just couldn't imagine his life without Will in it. Without him as a constant presence by his side. They'd been through so much together.

Will's like his lifeline. The thing that keeps Mike grounded a lot of the time when it'd be so easy to just lose touch with the world when the crazy inevitably starts back up again. Because his life is objectively insane, and having something normal to claw back to helps.

And this is his normal. Him and Will hanging out reading comics sprawled out over each other in a way that's probably kind of weird for guys their age if Mike thinks about it too much. But Will didn't seem to care as he casually dumped a load of comics on the sofa between them and stretched his legs out across Mike.

Mike hasn't been reading his comic for a while, he realises vaguely. He's been watching Will over the top of his page. He should probably find that more creepy than he does, but he can't seem to stop himself.

Mike is acutely aware of the feel of Will's leg against his. They're both in shorts, the basement hot and the air close and still, and Mike's skin tingles where Will's touches it. Will's foot is tapping on thin air to a beat only he can hear. Mike's glad he's holding onto a comic; it helps him fight the urge to reach out and trail his fingers over the soft skin just above Will's ankle.

Will's eyes are glued to the page in front of him. Mike doesn't know what's going on in the comic Will's reading but his big hazel eyes are scanning the page intently.

Mike likes seeing Will like this. He's spent so long being put through so much horror; way more than anyone should have ever had to deal with. Lost in an evil parallel dimension hunted by a hideous monster, possessed by a trans-dimensional shadow demon who used him as a pawn to murder and destroy.

But like this, Will's just like any normal teenager. Totally focused on something totally unremarkable. Mike loves seeing Will able to just relax and be calm.

Because Mike loves Will.

The sheer enormity of that thought still scares Mike sometimes. But he can't possibly deny it any more. He's always known what he has with Will is special, something somehow more than his friendship

with Dustin or with Lucas. There was always something under the surface of it that he couldn't seem to put his finger on.

He hadn't wanted to admit it, at first. He heard how people thought about boys who love other boys; about queers. He knew Will got bullied because people called him gay. A fag. A fairy. It always boils Mike's blood and in a funny way he now realises why it would have such an effect on him; they weren't just insulting Will. They were insulting him too.

Kind of.

Mike knew he liked boys. Or, at least, knew he loved Will. He couldn't think of any other guys he knew that he felt anywhere close to the same way about. But he knew he still found girls attractive too.

He supposed he had his whole life to figure the details of that out. But he didn't have long left with Will. And the only thing Mike knew for sure is that he knew he couldn't let Will leave without telling him the truth.

But he never knew how to start. They'd had plenty of times where they'd been alone, just the two of them, just like now. But he couldn't just blurt out "oh by the way I'm head-over-heels in love with you in a really gay way, just thought you should know."

And this moment just feels like the one. Mike can't explain it, but it just does. There's something in the air, maybe. The way it seems to be so close around them, almost like they're sealed inside their own little bubble.

Just the two of them. The outside world doesn't matter, all that matters in this moment is him, and Will. So he does what he does best; he turns his brain off and just opens his mouth.

"I never apologised."

Will looks up from his comic. "Huh?"

Okay, so this actually happening. Will's eyes are focused on him over the top edge of his comic, wide and curious. A small frown on his face. Mike can't see his lips but god, he wants to lean over and just

kiss him. But not yet. Maybe not ever. He hopes it's not never.

Fuck it.

"That night. When you destroyed Castle Byers. When the Mind-Flayer came back." Mike sees Will flinch at the name; not a big tell, and he probably doesn't know he's doing it. "I dragged Lucas out in the pouring rain to find you, to tell you I'm sorry. But I never did."

Will shrugs. "It's fine, Mike. We had bigger stuff to worry about."

"That shouldn't matter," Mike insists. He pulls his legs up and faces Will properly. "I hurt you. And I never said sorry. You just carried on like it never happened."

"Yeah, because I forgave you." Will says "it was the heat of the moment. We both said stupid stuff. But it's over. We're good."

Mike can feel himself getting angry. Angry at himself. Because he doesn't deserve someone as good to him as Will is. Mike was horrible to him; he made him cry. And Will's just forgiving him, that easily.

"We're not good," Mike gets out "how can we be good when I did that to you? You can't just forgive me that easily, Will!"

"Who says?" Will asks. There's challenge in his eyes now. "You're my best friend. You said something stupid. But so did I. So I called it even."

"How can you just forgive me like it's nothing?" Mike asks.

Will takes a deep breath, and Mike isn't expecting what comes next. Not in a million years.

"Because you were right," Will says. There's fire behind Will's eyes, a fierceness within him that he so rarely allows to be seen. He doesn't take his eyes off Mike, and Mike's brain screeches to a halt.

"What?"

"I don't like girls." Will takes a breath, like he's steadying himself. "I don't like girls. And I never will. I'm gay, Mike."

Wait, what?

For a second Mike thinks he can't possibly have heard him properly. Thinks he must be hallucinating and imagining it, because there's no way that he actually just heard Will say those words. Some of the words that he's been aching, deep in his heart, to hear.

But he's not hallucinating. This can't be a dream, and if it is he doesn't want to risk pinching himself in case he wakes up from it and finds himself alone in his bed, without Will sat across from him. Without Will having just confessed to being gay.

It simply can't be real. His life can't start suddenly being fair and nice to him now, can it? After so much crap that he and his friends and his family have been through, some part of him had kind of started to give up hoping for anything to be normal, or better than that actually be nice, again. Surely this is some weird side-effect of the Mind Flayer. Making him believe he's getting something he's wanted so much only for it to disappear right in front of him.

Just like when Will told him he's moving away, Mike expects the "gotcha" or "I'm only joking" any second, but it doesn't seem to be coming. Will looks so serious about it, like it's the most important thing he's ever said. Maybe it is; Mike doesn't know what it's like to confess that kind of thing to anyone.

He's only ever managed to say it out loud to himself once, into the bathroom mirror, when he was one hundred percent sure everyone else was out of the house and nobody could possibly overhear him.

And even that had been awkward; he's stood there staring at his own reflection for what felt like hours. He could barely look himself in the eye. The silence had been oppressive, and terrible, and he'd nearly just backed away. Nearly just run and hid and pretended he wasn't actually about to say it, that he didn't actually feel these things and that he was just confused and he just needed to kiss El again and everything would be okay and he'd be normal again.

And his stomach had turned a bit, thinking about kissing El again. It wasn't that he didn't like kissing El. Kissing was fun. But these feelings about Will had changed things; he knew, for better or for

worse, there was no way back to how anything used to be. He'd been trying to deny it and write it off as a fleeting thing and the horror of what they'd all been through recently had let him allow himself to just not think about it, at least as much as possible.

Then reality had come crashing back in on him when Will had said he was leaving and that had been the end of denial. Mike had had to face up to his new reality: he wasn't straight. And he was in love with his best friend. And he had no idea what to do about it. And no idea about how his life was going to go now, any possible random idea of his future torn up and set on fire.

But now Will... Will was gay. And some part of Mike's heart was daring to dream, some kind of impossible stupid dream that they could be together properly. He wanted to desperately to believe it, but Will was leaving no matter what he did or said. And damn if he knew it wasn't going to hurt all the more now because of this.

"Mike, please say something."

Shit!

The first thing that slips from Mike's mouth is a short, sharp laugh before he can stop it. Because he feels ridiculous. Will likes guys. Will Byers, the boy Mike is in love with, likes boys. Mike can't help the thought that crosses his mind that if his life was a D&D campaign he'd jump up from the table and accuse the Dungeon Master of fudging dice rolls to deliberately fuck with his character at this point.

But then he looks at Will, properly sees him, and any joy or bitter amusement dies a death on the spot.

Because Will looks angry. Very angry. Angrier than Mike thinks he's ever seen him. And Mike hates it. He hates seeing Will angry; seeing that beautiful gentle soul in pain like this. And hates most of all that it's him causing it, fucking again.

"I get it," Will's saying and the coldness in his voice makes Mike want to flinch like Will just straight-up punched him. He thinks he might prefer it if Will just straight-up punched him. It'd probably be easier to take than cold disappointment.

"No!" Mike blurts out as Will starts to stand up, ready to presumably storm out of Mike's life. "No, fuck. I'm sorry, I'm not laughing at you Will. I promise, I'm not!" He sounds desperate, but he doesn't care.

"Then what was so funny?" Will thankfully sits back down, but further away on the sofa and he's still eyeing Mike with suspicion.

"I don't know," he lies "it's just... I mean, it was a shock that's all. Dumb response to a shock, I know. But yeah. Just wasn't expecting it." And boy if that isn't the understatement of the fucking century.

"Are you really surprised?" Will asks. His voice is back out of angry territory, and he just sounds genuinely curious.

"Was I meant to know in advance?"

"Good point," Will says with a breathy little laugh, and it feels like order is restored again. Will's not going to storm out and abandon Mike. At least not before he has to. Mike swallows that unwelcome intrusion. "I just thought someone might have figured it out. I mean, Troy and James -"

"Were assholes," Mike insists immediately because he knows where Will's going with that train of thought.

"Yeah." Will says quietly and lets it drop. There's a weird silence that settles between them, like neither of them can figure out what to say next. At least Mike sure as hell doesn't, except the obvious. But then Will breaks the silence. "You really didn't know?"

"It's not like you made it obvious."

"I know I just thought..." Will looks away from him, suddenly seeming so timid compared to earlier.

"What did you think?" Mike asks, voice soft as he can make it.

"I thought maybe you'd work it out," Will says quietly. "Or Dustin. Or Lucas."

"Sorry, I guess?" Mike offers. Will's smile starts small, but grows and grows until suddenly he's bursting out laughing. And it's just Mike's

favourite sound in the world and he finds himself joining Will laughing. And it's comfortable, and it's normal. And it gives his brain time to tick over because Will Byers likes boys and Mike honestly thinks it might take him the rest of his life to adequately process that development.

Will stifles his laughter after a while. "I was kind of afraid I'd been making it obvious," he says.

"What, by dancing with the girl at the Snowball Dance like the rest of us?" Mike shoots back with a smile, remembering the night. His thoughts drift to El again and a pit of guilt threatens to open up in his stomach; he hasn't told her about any of his feelings about Will. He wouldn't even know how to begin having that conversation at all, with anyone let alone his ex-girlfriend. He knows it'll need to happen but has been trying to avoid thinking about it as much as possible.

Will chuckles and leans back into the sofa, looking off into some vague point on the ceiling. "Fair point," he says. "I hated that, you know."

"Really?" Mike leans back too. It feels comfortable between them again now, but in the back of Mike's mind he can feel the urge to ask more. He doesn't know how much Will would want to talk about it, but he feels like he needs to know more. He's just discovered this whole new part of his best friend and even if he ignores his own selfish desire to have Will suddenly confess his undying love for him, as if that'll ever happen, he's desperate to learn more.

"God yeah," Will's voice has no bite to it, no anger. Like he's just remembering an odd curiosity. "She didn't even know my name. She called me Zombie Boy."

Mike can't help the chuckle that slips out of him, but mercifully Will joins him in sharing it, then they lapse into silence.

"That's the first night I knew," Will says after a while.

"Knew?"

"That I didn't like girls the way I was supposed to," Will says. And

Mike's amazed he's willing to talk about it, at all. But Will's always been braver than him, always been stronger than him. Just one of the reasons Mike loves him. "I was stuck there with this girl who didn't even know my name. I didn't even know hers, I never bothered to ask. And I was just looking around, at..." Will bites his lip a little. "Looking around at all the other couples all dancing and looking so happy. Even Nancy looked happy dancing with Dustin. And I just couldn't help but feel... wrong. Like I should be dancing with a boy, you know? Like, why shouldn't I dance with a boy?"

Mike can't help himself when his mind drifts to imagine himself dancing with Will. How his arms would slip so easily around Will's waist. Will's arms round his neck. Them swaying together, so close they can feel each others' breath. Will's stupidly beautiful eyes looking up at him, that smile across his face. The smile he reserves just for Mike. That maybe, just maybe, he could just lean down just a little bit and feel Will's lips on his own. And fuck, what a feeling it'd be. He just knows it'd be amazing. He feels desperate to know that it feels like.

And he feels drunk on it, on the feeling. Giddy and excitable and he's pretty sure his legs move by themselves as he finds himself standing up and crossing the room to turn the volume on the cassette player up. It had been drifting quiet music into the room, a mix tape Will had made at some point.

Soft music, nothing harsh or aggressive. So like Will.

Mike feels like his chest is going to burst with how much love he feels, and how Will deserves to be able to be happy the way he wants to be. Because the world sucks anyway, and it's not fair, and Mike just needs to do something to show Will that he deserves to feel happy and be himself.

"You should be able to," he says and his voice comes out strong and steady in total contrast to how he feels. "You should be allowed to dance with whatever boy you want to."

And he holds his hand out. And can't believe he does it.

Will blinks owlishly up at him, eyes darting between Mike's face and

his hand that's somehow still outstretched and even more surprisingly isn't shaking like he feels it should be.

"Funny joke, Mike." Will says with a smirk, but is still staring at Mike's hand.

"Not a joke." Mike says and he has no earthly clue where this reckless confidence is coming from, because every logical part of his brain is screaming at him for being an idiot and telling him to bail. "You want to dance with a boy? Come on then."

Will's eyes dart back and forth a couple more times and Mike gets the creeping feeling he was going to laugh it off and the moment would be over and Mike would look like an idiot and have to pretend he was only joking too.

"Try and dip me and I'll kill you," Will says, face breaking out in a smile. And if Mike drops dead right now he'll die happy.

Will reaches out and takes Mike's hand, and it feels like a spark shoots right through Mike's whole body. He's held Will's hand before, but it never felt like this. That was him comforting a friend, this feels... intimate. He doesn't know if he's blushing or not but he feels like he must be, and hopes Will doesn't notice.

But then Will's arms are snaking up to rest gently on his shoulders and any logical brain function shuts down as Mike lets himself happily drown in the feeling, his skin hot and tingly and the hairs on the back of his neck standing on end.

Lookin' in your eyes

I see a paradise

This world that I've found is too good to be true

Standin' here beside you

Want so much to give you

This love in my heart that I'm feeling for you

His hands find Will's hips. His fingertips feel like they're on fire as they lightly pull Will closer, and if he gets any hotter he thinks he might spontaneously combust.

Let 'em say we're crazy

I don't care about that

Put your hand in my hand

Baby don't ever look back

Let the world around us

Just fall apart

Baby we can make it

If we're heart to heart

"Guess I'm leading, then?" he asks, trying for a joke but his voice comes out breathy and muted. He swallows thickly, feels a lump of nerves thud into his stomach.

And we can build this dream together

Standing strong forever

Nothing's gonna stop us now

And if this world runs out of lovers

We'll still have each other

Nothing's gonna stop us

Nothing's gonna stop us now

"You're taller," Will says quietly and shrugs. His shirt pulls up a little as he does it and Mike fights the urge to trail his fingers higher to brush over the exposed skin at Will's middle.

I'm so glad I found you

I'm not gonna lose you

Whatever it takes

I will stay here with you

Take you to the good times

See you through the bad times

Whatever it takes

Is what I'm gonna do

They start to move together. Mike isn't a good dancer, hasn't got much experience, but he doesn't care. It feels right, like this. Just him, with Will in his arms. And it's like the world around them stops existing, nothing matters to him outside of this moment.

Let 'em say we're crazy

What do they know?

Put your arms around me

Baby, don't ever let go

Let the world around us

Just fall apart

Baby, we can make it

If we're heart to heart

Will's looking up at him, so tantalisingly close, and Mike thinks to himself that this must be happiest moment of his life. His heart feels so full it should be painful, and the dim lights of the basement dance in Will's eyes like magical pools he would willingly drown in time and time again.

And we can build this dream together

Standing strong forever

Nothing's gonna stop us now

And if this world runs out of lovers

We'll still have each other

Nothing's gonna stop us

Nothing's gonna stop us

They could be like this all the time. In that moment, Mike so desperately wants to let himself believe it. That he and Will could be together, properly, for the rest of their lives. Fuck what the world around them thought, nothing that felt this right could be wrong, could it?

Oh, all that I need is you

All that I ever need

All that I want to do

Is hold you forever

Forever and ever...

All that he needed to do was tell Will. Tell Will how he felt, and hope that his best friend felt the same. But he felt the fear creeping at the back of his mind; just because Will liked guys doesn't mean he thought about Mike that way. He didn't want to ruin it.

And we can build this dream together

Standing strong forever

Nothing's gonna stop us now

And if this world runs out of lovers

We'll still have each other

Nothing's gonna stop us

Nothing's gonna stop us

Mike nearly jumps as he feels Will's fingertips brush against his nape. His skin flushes hot. Will must have moved closer; he can swear he feels the heat of Will's body. Will's eyes are so wide as he looks up at him. Will runs his tongue over his lip, just quickly, and Mike is mesmerised following it. It would be so easy to just lean down, just close that distance...

Build this dream together

Standing strong forever

Nothing's gonna stop us now

And if this world runs out of lovers

We'll still have each other

Nothing's gonna stop us

"Mike..."

And we can build this dream together

Standing strong forever

Nothing's gonna stop us now

And if this world runs out of lovers

We'll still have each other

Nothing's gonna stop us

"Will.."

And we can build this dream together

Standing strong forever

Nothing's gonna stop us now...

The music fades out.

Reality crashes back in. "Will, I..." he swallows a cold slab of nerves. He needs to do this, needs to say it out loud. This is the moment, he can feel it with his whole damn soul.

"Yeah?" Will's voice is quiet. Breathy. He doesn't move back. His hands trail back to rest on Mike's shoulders.

"Do you... do you remember, the last time Steve snuck us into the movies?" Mike sees the confusion flicker across Will's face. "For Day of the Dead? Just before the Mind F... just before he came back?"

"Of course I do," Will says "Mike, why are you -?"

"You felt him, I know you did," Mike says and he feels like it's all coming out in a rush now. It's happening, and he couldn't stop himself if he wanted to. He doesn't want to. "I asked if you were okay, and you said you were, but I knew you weren't."

"Mike..."

"That... that was the first time, Will." Will's eyes are burning into him, almost daring him to carry on. "That was the first time I thought about kissing you."

It feels like the words suck all the air out of the room. The silence hangs heavy. Half of Mike's idiot brain can't even really process that he's finally said it until after it happens. Time freezes. The world stops spinning. All that matters now, all that Mike cares about, is what Will does now.

Then Will pulls away from him. His hands drop from Mike's shoulders, he steps back out of Mike's grip, and he sits on the arm of the sofa. Mike's heart drops, feels like starts to rip right down the middle clean in two.

But anything more he could say dies in his throat when Will laughs.

It's soft, and it's gentle. It's not a harsh laugh, not like Troy or James

when they'd laugh out of spite and mockery. It's that pure Will laugh and it makes Mike's heart swell just hearing it

"Why didn't you say anything?" Will asks. He's looking down at the floor, at a spot between himself and Mike. Mike wishes he'd look at him; he needs to see his eyes, needs to know what Will's thinking.

"I didn't know," Mike confesses. "I was scared, okay? I was fucking terrified, how could I not be? I didn't know about you. Fuck, I didn't even know about myself. I still don't, really. I'm still trying to figure this out. What I am, or how I feel about so many things. All I know is..."

And he's moving on instinct, now. He's not thinking about it, he can't let himself think about it or he'll chicken out. This needs to happen now. So he closes the gap between him and Will again, and finds himself kneeling on the basement carpet looking up, into Will's beautiful face.

Will's eyes are wide, and Mike can see tears in them threatening to fall. He reaches out, and takes Will's hands. It's the moment of truth.

"All I know," he says, slowly, needing to make sure Will is with him "is that I'm completely in love with you, Will Byers. I think I have been for a long time."

There's a pause. Will's breath hitches, just quietly, but Mike doesn't have time to worry, to overthink it, because then Will's talking.

"I wanted you to." Will says, his voice strained. He almost sounds like he's fighting back tears.

"What?"

"In the movie theatre," Will says in practically a whisper. "I wanted you to kiss me. I knew you wouldn't, you were dating El and we were in public. But I was selfish, and I wanted it. I wanted you, Mike." Will swallows nervously. "I want you, Mike. I think I always have, ever since we first met, since you asked me to be your friend. I didn't know what it was back then, but I knew right there I never wanted to be apart from you."

Mike's brain is going to leak out of his ears. Will Byers, his beautiful amazing talented best friend, the boy he's hopelessly in love with, wanted to kiss him. Will wants him. He doesn't know whether he wants to laugh, or cry, or run outside and scream into the heavens with joy. The wind's been knocked out of him. If this is a dream he never wants to wake up. Ever. He wants to stay here, in this moment, with his Will. Forever.

"I love you, Mike Wheeler."

A sob forces its way up from somewhere deep inside Mike. Then another. He never thought he'd ever be able to hear Will say those words. He buries his face in Will's shoulder and clings to him. This is real, he has to remind himself.

This is real. Will Byers loves him. Will Byers loves him. Will Byers loves him. Fuck, it's real.

"Fuck I was going to try and be cool," he chokes out against Will's neck. He feels Will chuckle and a laugh makes its way past the sobs.

"You've never been cool," Will mutters to him softly, turning to nose at the back of Mike's neck "but I don't care. I still love you." Mike sobs again. "I love you, Mike. I can't believe I finally get to say it."

"Why couldn't we have figured this out sooner?" Mike pulls back from the hug, rubbing at his eyes and trying to force a light smile even as his stomach clenches and knots around the knowledge that Will is leaving.

"I don't know," Will says and his eyes are definitely filled with tears too "but it doesn't matter. We'll work it out, right? We'll figure something out, I know it."

"Yeah," Mike agrees "yeah, we'll figure it out."

"I'm not leaving yet," Will says "we've got time. Together. All that matters is right now, just us." He gets a sly smile on his face, almost mischievous. "So what do you want to do now?"

Mike doesn't even need to think about it. "I want to kiss you. So fucking much."

"Then do it."

And it's like Mike's on autopilot. He surges forward and finally, after so long, closes the gap between himself and Will. He feels Will's breath fan across his face, sees Will close his eyes..

And it's unreal. The feeling as his lips press against Will's. Something deep inside him, something primal and passionate, roars in pure triumph as he feels Will wrap his arms around Mike's shoulders and he's being pulled closer, impossibly close. Will's essence consumes everything around him, every other thought is silenced. Nothing else matters, nothing else will ever matter again.

Will's lips are soft against his, kissing back with a desperation to mirror Mike's own. The rush is incredible, the elation, the pleasure. Will's practically wrapped around him, and he encloses Will in his arms.

Mike's never felt this good. He'll never get tired of this. This is everything he's ever wanted. He is complete.

A moan rumbles up out of Will, quiet and strained, and Mike chases it. Licks into Will's mouth as his lips part and he swears both of them shiver as their tongues explore each other. Will's tongue, his mouth, his body are so hot against Mike. Will's fingers tangle into the back of his hair and tug, just a little, enough to rip a moan of Mike's own out of him.

Mike's drowning, falling helplessly into the waves of warmth and joy and love that he feels surging over him. Sinking deeper and deeper, utterly consumed by this moment.

They pull apart, shamelessly panting against each other. Mike doesn't think Will's ever looked more beautiful. He looks debauched. Hair messed up, eyes closed in pleasure, mouth red and wet and still so inviting. Mike dives in again to steal another lingering kiss off those lips and Will moans into him.

"Wow." Will breathes out. "Why haven't we been doing that all along?"

A breathy laugh punches its way out of Mike's lungs. "I don't know, but I never want to stop."

"Then don't."

They'd figure out what to do later. How they'd adapt to Will being so far away. Mike still doesn't know what he was going to tell El, or how much he was going to tell her, about any of this.

But right now, it doesn't matter. All that matters is Will's smile, his yelp as Mike overbalances them and takes both them over the arm of the sofa onto the cushions, Will's laugh, Will's arms around him as he pulls Mike down to him, Will's lips against his.

And Will's whispered "I love you."

Author's Note:

This both took way longer than I intended, and is way longer than I intended. I only hope it's worth it and that someone gets some enjoyment out of this mess.